



# THE AMERICAN INDIAN HOBBYIST



VOL. I, NUMBER 4

Los Angeles, Calif.

DECEMBER 1954

## INDIAN GIFT GIVING

Now that the Christmas season is approaching, most people think of the Christian ideal of gift giving. "The Joy of Giving", or "It is better to give than to receive". The Indians too were great gift givers, but they did not confine their giving to one season of the year.

Indian Gift Giving customs varied from tribe to tribe, but certain elements appear which are common from the Northwest Coast Tlingit to the Eastern Iroquois. A careful examination of these customs reveals that the Indian and Christian ideals are not very different. Usually the Indian expected a gift in return, but we do also. Don't you feel slighted when you don't receive Xmas cards from the people you sent cards to? The basic reason for giving gifts is almost universal, it makes the giver feel important. He in effect says, "See how generous I am." or "See how rich I am, I can afford to give expensive gifts." The Indian admitted he was giving a gift to raise his prestige, the White Man has the same reason but won't admit it.

Can you imagine yourself putting months of labor into a beaded vest and then giving it to the first stranger who admired it? The Indian has been known to do this. Be careful in your praise of an Indians' possessions, he may feel obliged to give it to you.

The Indian custom of gift giving can very effectively be carried over into the Indian Lore program. Here, in Southern California the various Order of the Arrow Lodges have given gifts for years. At an annual area conference one group will present another with a gift. Unless they state that no gift is required in return, the receiver will present a gift of equal value to the giver at the next annual conference. These gifts are usually some simple item such as a medicine bag with one object from each member of the Lodge, a drum, a pipe, etc.

The same sort of exchange of gifts can be worked out between several Indian Lore groups, the members of one group, or at a summer camp. The Give Away Dance, as presented in Bernard Mason's book, "Dances & Stories of the American Indian", can be worked into any size group and it is very effective in promoting friendship and generosity.

Several points to keep in mind when giving or receiving gifts: Never give anything you yourself would not want. Never trade, sell or give away anything that has been given to you as a gift. Always return a gift within the time limit allowed. Always use or wear a gift you receive. Be quick to announce that something you are wearing was given to you by so and so. Something you made will have more value as a gift than something purchased.

If you give a gift and after a reasonable length of time (about 1 year) no gift is given in return, or if your gift is not used by the receiver; Take It Back. He evidently doesn't appreciate it and therefore should not have it.

## CONTEST

I'm frankly disappointed in the amount of entries I have received for the contest. I don't know if this is because nobody wants a porcupine hair roach or if my readers are just plain too lazy to write. As a result I am extending the deadline date to March 15 and changing the rules slightly. Instead of restricting the entries to Construction Hints, I will accept any article I can use in the magazine. Why not submit your favorite dance, or a story on your Indian Dance group, or some good craft project. We do not have a large circulation, and your chances of winning are better than you probably realize. No limit on the number of entries.



## RED SHIELD INDIAN CLUB



Baltimore's Red Shield Boys' Club, established in 1936 by the Salvation Army as a member of Boys' Clubs of America, had as one of its initial ventures, a group which became vitally interested in the study of the American Indian, his life and customs. Led by Major Douglas Eldredge, whose background was rich in experience in this field, this small group was destined to grow to surprising proportions.

At first, meetings were held in the basements of the members homes, while funds were sparse donations. Even with these hardships, the boys presented dancing shows, exhibiting costumes which they made themselves. In 1938, the Salvation Army acquired a new building, providing a real meeting place where the "Indians" could have their own room. More and more people became interested in this project of the Boys' Club as it quickly captured local favor.

Proof of the increasing popularity was realized when an invitation to appear in the 1940 New York World's Fair was recieved. Other notable engagements of the group have included performances at the American Indian Day Celebration in Jamaica, Long Island, 1940; Outdoor Life Shows in Baltimore's Fifth Regiment Armory, 1938, 1940, and 1949; The Boy Scouts of America National Jamboree at Valley Forge, Pa. 1950; and the Folk Festivals held at the University of Pennsylvania and at Washington, D.C. Many shows are presented for various organizations throughout Maryland, averaging well over one hundred annually.

The Red Shield Indian Dancers look with pride at a letter, recieved from an Indian woman present at the American Indian Day Celebration, in which she expresses her appreciation of the fine work of the group. Numerous awards for top honors have resulted from the shows presented at the Folk Festivals.

In sharp contrast to their meager start, the Red Shield Indian Dancers work today in a well equipped, spacious room, strikingly unique in its resemblance to a museum. Authentic costumes, made by the individual members, plus many Indian Handicrafts are displayed in glass-paneled show cases while not being used in shows. Walls of knotty pine and a red and black tile floor add to the atmosphere. Two large pine tables with benches provide ample space for bonnet making and beadwork; and, when it is time to practice dancing, the tables are moved, revealing an adequate practice area. An adjoining annex room is available for such crafts as carving and painting.

Many hours are devoted to making costume and rehearsing dancing, not only at the club and its Glenn L. Martin branch at Middle River, Md., but also at Camp Puh'tok, summer home of the Red Shield Boys' Club, where the Indian Dancers, who are also counslers, perform during the special Indian Council fires, Ti Pi Wah Kan, which traditionally close each of the four camping periods each season.

Authentic dances, chosen from those of the Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Hopi, Chippewa, and others, are portrayed, presenting audiences a varied picture of the Eastern, Plains, and Southwest tribes.

The Indian group sets its aims beyond making costumes and learning dances, as it strives to build leaders within the club, the camp, and the community. It provides opportunity for youth, 10-18, to present learned skill to the public, which, in turn, sees the sadly misunderstood Red Man in a new light — the real Indian.



# YEI - BE - CHI

If you are one of the groups that have been doing nothing but Plains dances, this will be a welcome addition to your dance program. It is not at all like any Plains dancing, and has the advantage of using both male and female dancers which also adds to the program. A word of advice to those who are going to dance the Yei-Be-Chi, the dance without the Navaho chant loses 99% of the effect. Several good Yei-Be-Chi recordings are available (see the November issue) and if you can't learn the chant use the record to accompany the dance.

**COSTUME:** Typical Navaho dress. Men in white pants with bright velveteen shirt and cloth headbands. Women in full calico skirts and velveteen blouses. Both wear all the silver they can get their hands on.

**THE STEP:** The basic Yei-Be-Chi step is sort of a hesitation trot. Jump forward on the right foot, bending the knee, and at the same time bring the left foot up in back. Step down on the left foot about 5" behind the right toe. Repeat. The emphasis is on the jump. Hold a rattle in each hand with the hands bent at the elbows and held straight ahead. Shake the rattles downward with each jump.

The other step, used by the women for part of the dance, is a simple hop. With the feet held close together, jump to the side and bring the rattles down. Continue, shaking both rattles at each jump.

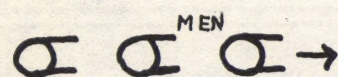


FIG. 1

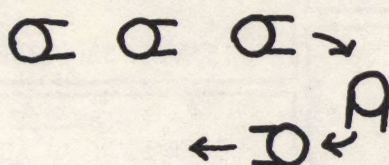


FIG. 2

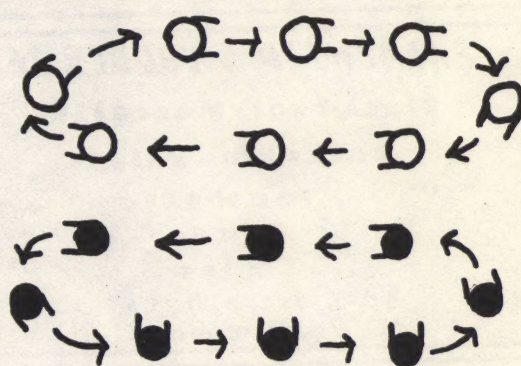


FIG. 3

**THE DANCE:** Enter in a single line alternating male and female. Circle-once counterclockwise and form a straight line, side by side, facing the audience. With the feet in place, bow to the right and roll the rattles. End the roll with a sharp yelp. Repeat to the left. The men move to the position shown in Fig. 1, and the women turn to face them. They move in the direction of the arrows, Fig. 1, the men doing the Yei-Be-Chi step and the women doing the side jump. The end couples pair off and move down the middle of the line, both use the Yei-Be-Chi step while moving down the middle. See Fig. 2. At the end of the line the pair separate, each going back to their original line. Here the women go back into the side hop and the men continue around in the Yei-Be-Chi. This action is repeated several times. At the conclusion dance off in couples, both using the Yei-Be-Chi and facing in the same direction.

The dance as presented above is only a very small fragment of the Nine day Night Chant Ceremony. In spite of the fact that this is just a fragment it makes a fine dance for audience presentation. And was presented by the Navaho at the Gallup Ceremonials in the exact form presented above.

If you are enjoying the "American Indian Hobbyist" you will probably also enjoy two other magazines devoted to the American Indian. These are:

**SMOKE SIGNALS** - Published by the Indian Association of America at 211 Ward Ave. Staten Island 4, New York. The magazine is published bi-monthly at \$1.50 per year.

The Indian Assn. of America, Inc. is a non-sectarian, non-profit, and non-political organization that is doing a fine job of helping the Indians as well as people interested in Indians. Their magazine is top notch, write them for it.

**THE AMERINDIAN** - This is another fine magazine "Published bi-monthly for friends of the American Indian and in the interest of his cause." It is published by Marion E. Gridley, a woman who has been helping the Indian for years and really knows his problems. This is a quality magazine full of Indian items in the news. Write to: **THE AMERINDIAN**  
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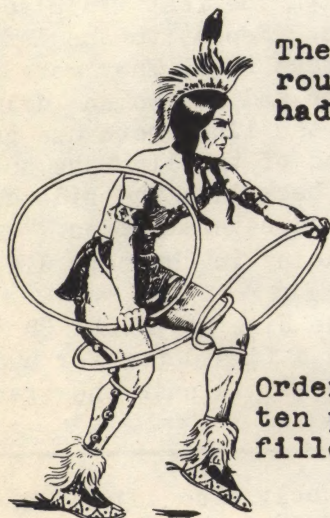
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# Where To Get It FEATHERS

One of the basic craft materials in any Indian Lore program is, ofcourse, feathers. I have seen feathers of every sort used effectively in costuming for bustles, bonnets, roaches, etc. One look at any of the old museum collections will tell you that the Indians use them all; Turkey, Owl, Eagle, Quail, pheasant, Crow, Flicker, Crane and many more. Eagles are a protected bird, and Eagle feathers are hard to get. Fortunately imitation Eagle feathers, of dyed Turkey tails and wings, are readily available and do a good job.

One of your most economical sources is your local butcher or poultry dealer. Try to get him to pluck the bird dry or the feathers will be ruined by the hot water. Wash the feather in luke-warm sudsy water and when dry work them back to their original shape by placing them in the steam from a tea kettle and working with the fingers. For bustles of the type where only the stripped quill is used, these feathers will serve as well as any other.

If you plan to make one object such as a bonnet, a roach, or bustle, it is often better to purchase a complete kit from one of the established Indian Craft Supply houses. Here you have the advantage of receiving everything necessary to complete your project at a cost that is usually less than you can purchase the materials alone for. Three of the better sources for kits of this sort are:

Grey Owl Indian Craft Co.  
4518 Seventh Ave.  
Brooklyn 20, New York

Fairchild Woodcraft  
6036 Hazelhurst Pl.  
N. Hollywood, Calif.

Plume Trading & Sales Co.  
P.O. Box 585  
Monroe, New York

If you can use feathers in larger quantities, or have any special requests in the line of unusual feathers, there are a host of feather dealers that will be glad to help you. The dealers listed below can supply one or one million of any type feather you want. Write them for prices etc.

Eastern Feather Co.  
169 Mercer St.  
New York 12, N.Y.

Mangrove Feather Co.  
42 W. 38th St.  
New York 18, N.Y.

Jack Deinstag Feather Co.  
59 E. 9th St.  
New York 3, N.Y.

Nathan Zucker, Inc.  
45 W. 38th St.  
New York 18, N.Y.

Hollywood Fancy Feather Co.  
319 S. Spring St.  
L.A. 13, Calif.

Check the classified phone books of New York and Chicago for other companies.

A few pointers to remember when ordering feathers: Be specific when asking for prices, let them know if you want tail or wing feathers, and the size you need. Most all feathers can be had in second grade quality. Don't order these and expect the best.

Many groups seem to feel that feathers are much too expensive, this is because of the large amount of hand work that goes into the preparation and sorting of the finished product. After the feathers are secured by the dealer, they are thoroughly washed. Then they are bleached, dyed, and sorted as to size and quality. When you consider the amount of work required in their preparation you begin to wonder how they can be sold so cheaply.

If you still feel that feathers are expensive, you can get them much more cheaply by eliminating any of the steps outlined above. So that unbleached feathers are cheaper than bleached ones. Unsorted feathers are cheaper than sorted ones. Undyed feathers are cheaper than dyed feathers, etc.

Feather work is one of the most important, most rewarding, simplest, and least expensive of any Indian Craft. After all an Indian costume is mostly just beads and feathers. Take advantage of the many sources available to you, and lots of luck in your feather work.

## THE AMERICAN INDIAN HOBBYIST

Published ten times a year at Los Angeles, California. "Copyright, 1954, by Norman Feder" Subscription rates: In U.S.A. \$2.00 for one year; \$3.75 for two years.

Norman Feder - Editor & Publisher  
Clarence Ellsworth - Artist

P. O. Box 35152  
Los Angeles 35, Calif.

Many of our recent subscribers are requesting that their first issue should be the Dec. or Jan. one. We feel that these people may like to have the back issues. If your subscription did not start with the Sept. issue drop us a card and we will make your subscription retroactive to the first issue.

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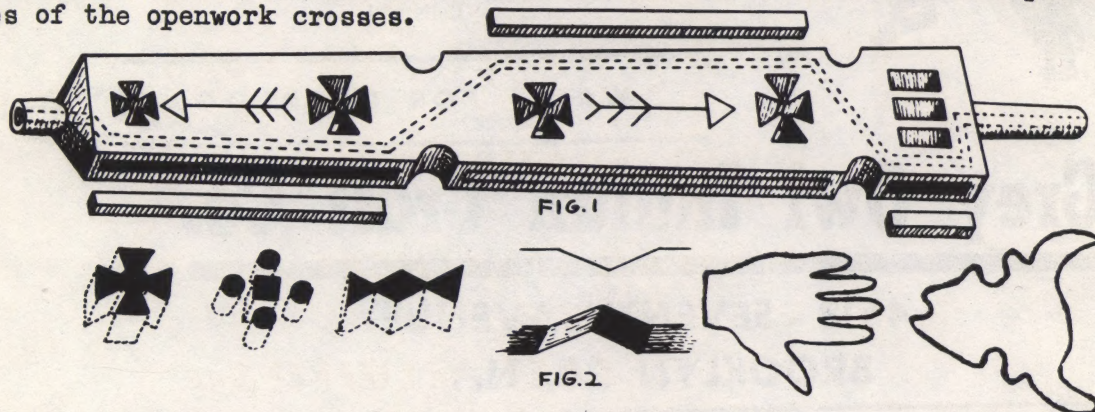
**New York 12, N.Y.**



## TRICK PIPE STEMS

Making pipestems is often a problem to the Indian Lore enthusiast because of the difficulty of getting the hole thru the center. The Indian used wood with a natural soft center, usually Ash, but any wood with a soft pith can be used such as Sumac, Elderberry, Box Elder etc. A gun cleaning rod or other stiff metal rod was heated and pushed through the pith. Unfortunately Ash is rare in many parts of the country and other woods are not very satisfactory, and so we look for substitutes. Many groups try splitting a solid piece of wood, grooving a center notch, and then glueing the two halves back together. This works but it is often hard to conceal the split. The method presented here was actually used by the Indians. The American Museum of Natural History has two very fine examples on display in their Plains room, visit them if you live in New York.

The trick here is to figure out how the smoke gets from one end to the other. The open work patterns in the middle of the stem make it seem impossible to the uninitiated. Fig. 1 shows how the stem is made. Whatever design you use be sure to cut holes thru the center. Use a fine sharp knife to chip out the side pieces as shown in the sketch. Then drill the holes following the dotted lines and glue the chips back in place. Outline the chip as well as the areas not chipped with incised lines and cover with blue paint. This helps to hide the knife marks. The arrow design is also incised and filled with blue paint, also paint the sides of the openwork crosses.



Several other designs are shown in Fig. 2. Try to devise some designs of your own. We don't want everyone with the same pipestem design. These stems are usually about 3' long by about 3" wide at the pipe end, and tapering to 2" at the mouth end. The sides are  $\frac{3}{8}$ " thick and the center is usually about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick.

## AMERICAN INDIAN LORE ASSOCIATION

Here is an organization that all you Indian "Bugs" should be interested in. Its founder, Red Dawn (Stephen S. Jones Jr.) is a full blooded Santee Sioux. The organization is still in its infancy, but it is growing steadily and shows great promise for growth. The idea is to get all the people interested into one organization, so that they can share information and experience with one another. They will stress developing leadership this largely thru Summer Camp work, but other outlets will also be available. They will publish a bulletin from time to time, which should be of interest to Indian Lore groups. The purpose of the organization as outlined by Mr. Jones is : To Study, interpret, and perpetuate the Lore of the American Indian.

Mr. Jones is well qualified to lead such a group. He learned his Indian Lore from the Indian themselves, rather than from books. He has had 15 years experience in YMCA boys' club work. He specializes in Summer Camp instruction. He has been instructing at summer camps for the last ten years. Last Summer he divided his time between three camps and conducted a succesful Indian program at all three. He also is a college instructor at Sioux Falls, where he teaches a course on the American Indian.

The organization is new so you have an opportunity to grow with it. If you are interested in any phase of Indian Lore contact:

Stephen S. Jones Jr.  
1018 South First Ave.  
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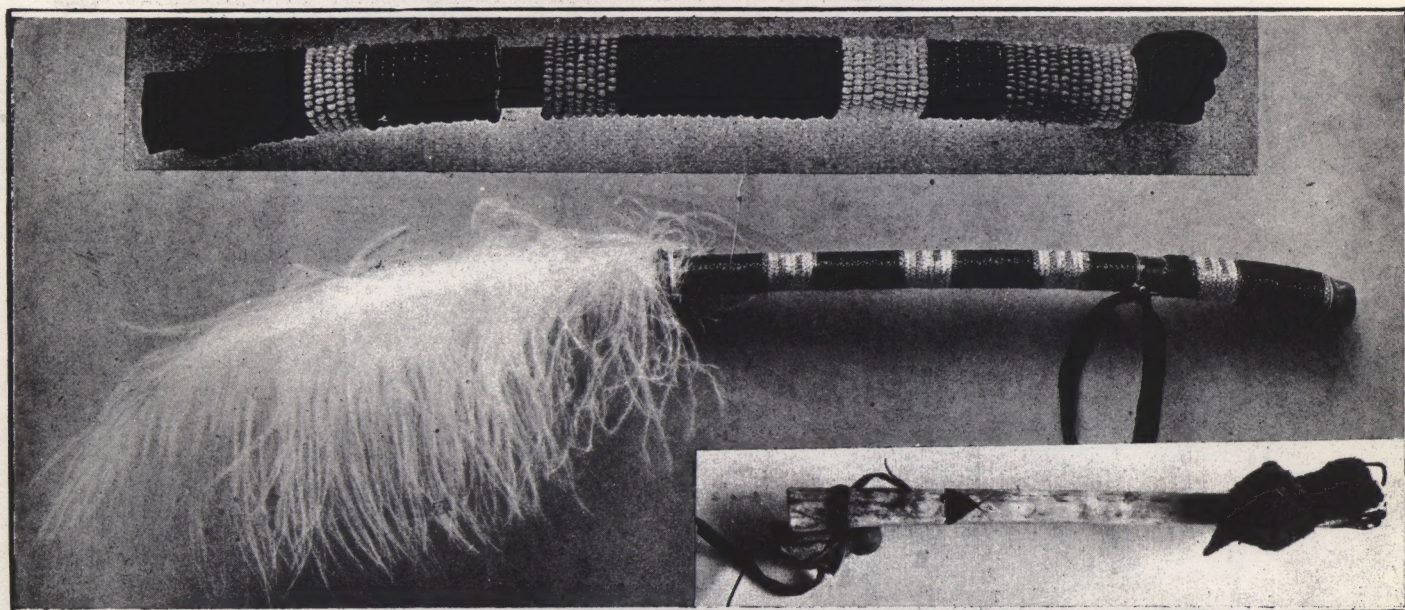




# WHISTLES

Whistles are a simple and effective accessory to any Indian Costume. They are a must for the Sun or Grass Dance of the Plains, and sound better in any dance than the whooping and yelling of beginning dance groups. They are also great for dance signals indicating an end or start of a new movement in a dance.

The bone whistle shown in Fig. 1, is made of the wing bone of an Eagle. This is most often the Ulna (the larger of the two forearm bones). For our purposes any large bone will do, such as a Turkey wing or drumstick. The wider end of the bone is cut off straight, this becomes the mouthpiece. The smaller end is ground down as shown in the drawing. Cut a triangular hole as in the lower photo, this is about  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " from the end and a little bit over  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch long. Pour molten sealing wax into the hole to make the stop. You will probably require some experimentation with the stop before you get a good sounding whistle. The sketch in Fig. 2 shows the fundamentals of a good stop. The peak of the wax does not extend past the start of the air hole and the distance between the top of the peak and the bone is extremely small. Fig. 3 also shows this very well. The arrow indicates which end to blow into. Sometimes the whistles work better if the smaller end is stopped up rather than open try this if you are having trouble. The photos show three different ways of decorating a bone whistle.



Photos from "Teton Sioux Music" by Frances Densmore; Bulletin # 61  
Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, 1918

The Drass Dance whistle is basically the same, but it is made of wood instead of bone. Any wood with a soft pith can be used, such as Ash, Box Elder, Sumac, Elderberry Etc. Carve a birds head in one end and a rectangular hole about  $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide by  $\frac{1}{2}$ " long in the top. The entire whistle is about 25" long and the hole is about  $6\frac{1}{2}$ " from the mouth end. The pith is burned out as in making a pipestem and has an inside diameter of  $\frac{1}{4}$ ". We recommend a plain whistle stop as in Fig. 3, but the Indian model had a stop as shown in Fig. 5. This had bird quills flattened, placed as shown and tied in place with red sinew. Bamboo or other reeds can also be used for these whistles.

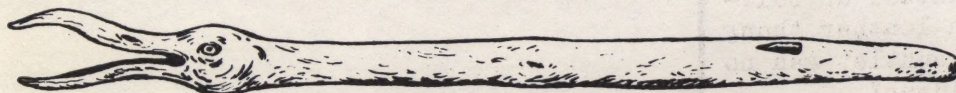


FIG. 4

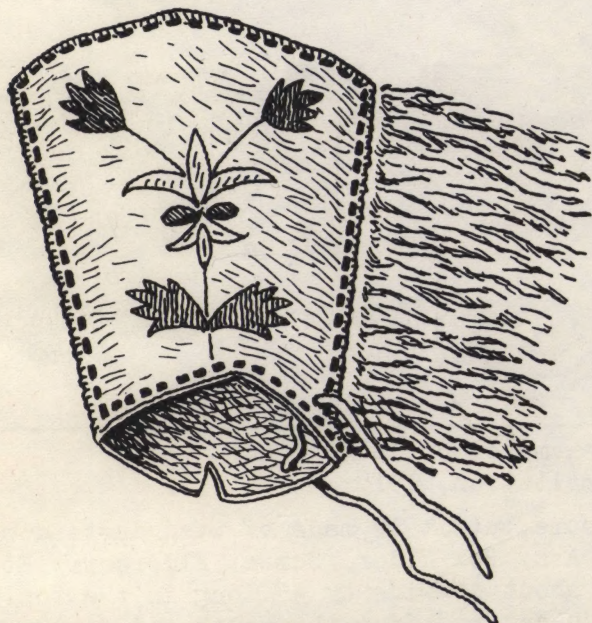


FIG. 5





## Construction Hints



Have you ever been bothered by twisting gauntlets? This is a common malady, where-in the gauntlets have a habit of twisting around the arm.

The sketch above shows a method of solving this problem. Simply lace a leather thong thru as shown. When tied the gauntlet can no longer twist. Have any other ideas?

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